

States will benefit because we are injecting this kind of money. In Ohio last week, \$550 million was sent to the State from the Federal Government to these children, to these families. And for most of these families—the wealthiest people don't get this—it is 90 percent; 9 out of 10 families do, but they have children.

This money goes directly into these communities. They are going to be spending this money at the local grocery store, the local hardware store, to fix their car so they don't miss work, and maybe take their kid once in a while to a restaurant. So the money is not going to be put in a Swiss bank account. It will be spent in local communities, making a difference. That is sort of the big picture.

The joy of working on this bill and starting—I started working on this in 2013, joined by MICHAEL BENNET and Senator BOOKER, and then, since he came, Senator WARNOCK and Senator BALDWIN and Senator OSSOFF have been helpful and Senator WYDEN, the chair of the Finance Committee. The joy of this is to see how this affects individual families' lives.

So a couple of weeks ago, before the checks were sent out, I did a series of roundtables in Defiance, in Findlay, in Ryan, in Cleveland, in Dayton, in Toledo, in—where else?—in Youngstown, and in Cincinnati, and I just asked families: What are you going to do with this money? Many families didn't know it was even coming; the word wasn't out yet. I just heard some interesting comments. But then after the checks were sent out, I also heard stories, and here is what this means to families:

One mother said: You know, for the first time, I can now send my son to camp for a week, to a summer camp—for the first time in her life.

A father said: You know, I am now going to be able to buy for my daughter—she loves fastpitch softball. She is really good. I am going to be able to buy her the equipment to do that.

A number of families said: We are now in a position where we can actually, without scrounging—so many American families can barely afford their rent. Twenty-five percent of American families pay half their income in rent. Think about that. One out of four renters pays half their income in rent. One thing goes wrong in their lives—their car breaks down—they can end up being evicted.

So what this \$300 per child or \$250 per child—for a lot of families, it just relieved the anxiety of the difficulty of putting together the money they need to pay their rent, because the last week of a month for many families is different from the first three because, the last week, they start making cuts and not spending as much money on food, all the things they have got to do to pay their rent. Look, this is going to alleviate—it is going to lift that burden off so many families.

Other families who are a little more affluent but still, you know, hanging

on to being middle class are now able, they told me, to put \$100 aside every month. Because of this child tax credit, because of the largest tax cut for working families ever, they are going to be able to put aside \$100 a month for their child to go to Ohio State or to Denison or to Cleveland State or to Sinclair Community College in Ohio.

So all the kinds of things—and you know, Madam President, I know you have, in Wisconsin, have thought about this. The best thing about this is, you know, it is not Senator BALDWIN or Senator SCHUMER or Senator MCCONNELL or President Biden—it is not them saying to a family: OK. Here is some money. Here is where you are going to spend it. We are going to help you with this. We are going to help you. It is trusting these families. This \$250 a month or \$300 a month these families get, they get this money, and they decide what is best for their family.

It is still, frankly, Madam President, inexplicable to me that everybody on this side of the aisle voted no, every single one of them. They had two chances. They voted no on an amendment on the bill, and then they voted no on the bill to give the largest tax cut for working families ever.

We all know around here—it is no secret—that this side of the aisle likes tax cuts; they just like them for rich people. But they always argue: You know, if we cut taxes on the rich, it will trickle down; it will help everybody. Well, there is kind of no evidence for that, but they keep doing it because they know that it plays really well with their rich contributors.

But this is what tax cuts are really about. The child tax credit puts money in people's pockets, it gives them the choice on how to spend those dollars on behalf of their families, and it helps the community because there is more money in the community. We know that, and we know that the best kind of infrastructure, the best way to build infrastructure in this country is to build a foundation for families.

I am for this bill that we are considering now: water, sewer, highways, bridges. I want to do that, but I want to build a foundation for families, too, not just the physical—a better highway system, a better water and sewer system—but I want to give families broadband. I want to give families a little bit of money like this does. I want to build and help families with housing because then that foundation—these families can launch their children into a more prosperous future, and that is, to me, what this is all about. That is why the child tax credit is the most important thing I have ever worked on in my career, and I think it is one of the most important things Congress has done in a quarter century.

I yield the floor.

(Mr. BROWN assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). The majority leader.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, before I close the Senate, I want to inform the Senators where we are today.

First, I want to thank all of the Senators who voted to proceed today. The bipartisan group is still finalizing the text of their agreement, which will be the substitute amendment, with a non-partisan legislative counsel.

Once they are finished—this is a big job—the text will be reviewed, and then I will immediately offer the text of the bipartisan infrastructure agreement as the substitute amendment, making it the base bill, as I have promised. As soon as the bipartisan group finalizes the text of the substitute amendment and it becomes the base bill, we can start voting on amendments and make further progress on the bill over this weekend.

The Senate will resume session tomorrow at 11 a.m.

This is a really important bill, and I know all the parties want to make sure it is done right.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a morning of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AFGHAN SPECIAL IMMIGRANT VISAS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, nearly 20 years ago, the United States invaded Afghanistan to prevent that country from being exploited as a platform for terrorism and extremism. In doing so, the U.S. worked side-by-side with international and Afghan forces to remove the Taliban from power, facilitate democratic elections, build democratic institutions, and promote human rights throughout Afghanistan. Because of these efforts and the commitment and dedication of the Afghan people, the Afghanistan of 2021 is far different than the Afghanistan of 2001. And now that Afghanistan has made this progress, we must work with our Afghan partners to do everything in our power to preserve these gains and leave a stable country behind us. It is both a moral obligation and a national security priority that we do so.

As U.S. troops withdraw from Afghanistan, the safety and security of our Afghan allies who put their lives on the line to help our servicemembers and diplomats must be a top priority. This is about fulfilling a sacred promise that we made to those who served the U.S.-led mission in Afghanistan. It is a service that many Afghans have already paid for with their lives. Like U.S. personnel, our Afghan partners